

## UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

District of New Mexico

**FILED**  
 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
 ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

JAN 19 2016

**MATTHEW J. DYKMAN**  
 CLERK

Case No. 16-MJ-184

United States of America  
 v.  
 Crystal Devon Romero  
 and  
 Michelle Josephine Candelaria

Defendant(s)

## CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of 1/12/16 and 1/15/16 in the county of Bernalillo in the  
 District of New Mexico, the defendant(s) violated:

| Code Section | Offense Description                              |
|--------------|--|
| 18, USC 1708 | Theft or receipt of stolen mail matter generally |
| 18, USC 371  | Conspiracy                                       |

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:  
 Please see attached affidavit

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.

*Stephanie Herman*  
 Complainant's signature

Stephanie Herman, Postal Inspector

Printed name and title

Sworn telephonically  
 Sworn to before me and signed in my presence. *A*

Date: 01/16/2016

City and state: Albuquerque, NM

*Karen Molzen* signed at the direction of judge *Molzen*  
 Judge's signature  
 Karen Molzen, Chief United States Magistrate Judge  
 Printed name and title



with a temporary paper license in the name of Lola Bird. Mr. Robertson stated that the address information on the rental agreement was taken from the temporary license. Mr. Robertson stated that he did not see the credit card because she swiped it. He stated that the transaction was approved. He stated that she was with another woman with a buzz haircut and "SVT" tattooed on the back of her head. He stated she was wearing blue flannel shorts and a gray hoodie. Mr. Robertson stated that they were driving a white Nissan Maxima with four doors and tinted windows. He stated he thought it may have been a 2008. Inspector Terry and I requested video of the transaction but it was not immediately available. Mr. Robertson stated that the truck was due back at 6:00pm on January 13, 2016.

6. Inspector Terry and I ran the driver's license number and it came back to a Mary Leach in Northeast Albuquerque. We ran the name Lola Bird in a law enforcement database, CLEAR, and found one person named Lola Bird in Albuquerque. I provided a still photo of the long haired female from the Lucaya House surveillance video to law enforcement, including NM Probation and Parole. I received information from Probation and Parole that an officer believed the female subject in that video was Crystal Romero.
7. On January 13, 2016, Inspector Specht and I showed the same still photo of the long haired female subject from the Lucaya House surveillance video to Mr. Robertson at U-Haul. Mr. Robertson stated he was 100% sure she was the same woman who rented the U-Haul Truck. Mr. Robertson called the phone number provided when the truck was rented. He stated that it went to voicemail but the mailbox was not set up so he was unable to leave a message. I obtained surveillance video from U-Haul at that time. I went to U-Haul at approximately 5:30pm to check on the truck. It had not been returned. I conducted surveillance until after 6:00pm and the truck was not returned as per the rental agreement.
8. On January 15, 2016, I went to U-Haul and spoke with Mr. Heredia. He stated that they had been attempting to reach "Ms. Bird" without success. He stated that the truck had not been returned. He stated it had not been reported embezzled to the police yet because they have a procedure they have to go through with their corporate office before doing so.
9. On January 15, 2015, at approximately 6:10pm, Inspector Brad Specht contacted me and told me that Albuquerque Police (APD) had detained two female subjects who were seen stealing mail in a U-Haul truck. Inspector Specht and I responded to 2509 Ridgecrest Dr. SE in Albuquerque and met with APD Officer C. Brito. Officer Brito stated that he was dispatched to 1318 Ridgecrest in reference to a report of mail theft. He stated he met with the resident who had surveillance video of two subjects in a U-Haul pickup truck opening his mailbox. The resident had previously picked up his mail. Officer Brito watched the video and saw a female subject wearing a blue sweater reach out of the passenger window and open the mailbox. He stated the only noticeable feature of the driver was a red shirt.
10. Officer Brito stated he attempted to locate the vehicle and observed it parked in front of 2509 Ridgecrest Dr. SE with two individuals who matched the description

from the video. He pulled behind them and conducted a traffic stop. He stated they were identified as Crystal Romero and Michelle Candelaria. Officer Brito handcuffed them and placed them into his vehicle and advised them that they were only being detained at that point. Officer Brito asked Ms. Romero for and obtained consent to search the truck. As he was looking into the vehicle, Officer Brito observed mail that did not belong to Ms. Romero or Ms. Candelaria so he contacted the Postal Inspection Service.


11. I identified myself to Ms. Romero and Ms. Candelaria and verbally advised them of their rights per Miranda in the presence of Officer Brito. I then asked Ms. Romero for consent to search the truck. She voluntarily gave me consent and they both stated they wanted to cooperate. Inspector Specht arrived and assisted with the search of the truck. We recovered stolen mail, including checks and credit/debit cards. Two of the checks had been altered. Inspector Specht observed drug paraphernalia in the truck. Officer Brito contacted Mr. Heredia and the truck was released to him. Ms. Romero and Ms. Candelaria were transported to the APD Phil Chacon Substation for interviews.
12. Inspector Specht and I interviewed Ms. Romero and she stated that her cousin, Lola Bird, paid for and rented the U-Haul truck for her because she is moving. She stated that she contacted U-Haul to extend the rental and the truck was due back at 7:00pm on this date. Ms. Romero stated that Ms. Candelaria is her girlfriend. Ms. Romero denied stealing mail and stated that Georgie had also been using the truck. When told we had surveillance video of her, she stated that Ms. Candelaria had left her on the side of the road and had been hanging out with Erica Rivera. Ms. Candelaria denied stealing mail. She stated that she had been at H & R Block with Ms. Candelaria's mother and was not wearing the blue sweatshirt she currently had on. She gave Inspector Specht consent to look at the texts on her phone. Inspector Specht reviewed the texts from Ms. Candelaria to Ms. Romero about "mail boxing". Mail boxing is commonly used among mail thieves to describe the act of stealing mail.
13. Inspector Specht and I interviewed Ms. Candelaria and told her that we had video of her in the U-Haul truck at Lucaya House. She admitted to stealing mail for a couple of weeks. She stated she used to hang out with people who stole mail. She admitted to driving the truck at Lucaya House and stated she had stolen mail in the Nob Hill area on this date. She would not admit that Ms. Romero pried open the cluster boxes at Lucaya House. She later stated she had not stolen mail with anyone other than Ms. Romero, except on this date when she stole mail while taking her friend home. She stated that he was not involved. Ms. Candelaria stated that her cousin and his girlfriend also used the truck and were stealing mail. Ms. Candelaria stated that she and Ms. Romero were not in the truck when it was seen on surveillance video on this date. She stated that the police officer said it was someone in a blue sweater and someone with a red shirt. Ms. Candelaria stated she understood how we could think it was them since Ms. Romero was wearing a blue sweatshirt and she was wearing a red shirt.
14. On January 16, 2016, I contacted Mr. Heredia and he stated that no one made arrangements to extend the rental agreement on the U-Haul truck to January 15,

2016. He also stated that the female subject in the video who represented herself as Ms. Bird was the person who rented the truck.

15. On January 16, 2016, Inspector Calvert contacted Lola Bird and she stated that she did not give anyone permission to use her name. She stated she stated she does not know Crystal Romero or Michelle Candelaria. She stated that she has been having an issue with her mail and she stated that two checks that were mailed to her had been stolen and cashed.
16. On January 16, 2016, Inspector Calvert contacted Lucy Lucero because check # 383 on her account was recovered from the U-Haul truck. The check was payable to Theresa Gonzalez for \$600. Ms. Lucero stated that she originally made the check payable to Chase Bank for \$16.44 and mailed it on or about December 22<sup>nd</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 from her mailbox at the end of her road in Bosque Farms, NM. She stated she also mailed check # 384 at that time. Ms. Lucero stated she did not give anyone other than the US Postal Service or the intended recipients permission to have her mail.
17. Inspector Calvert previously identified Crystal Romero as a mail theft suspect. He told me Ms. Romero was seen stealing mail on December 2, 2015 in a rented 2015 Nissan Rogue. He stated he has video surveillance of her using debit cards that were stolen from the mail.
18. Based on the information provided in this affidavit, I believe there is probable cause to believe that CRYSTAL DEVON ROMERO AND MICHELLE JOSEPHINE CANDELARIA were in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1708 Theft or Receipt of Stolen Mail Matter Generally and 371, Conspiracy.

  
Stephanie Herman, Postal Inspector

Subscribed and sworn to before me on this 16<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2016

 - signed at the direction of  
Karen Molzen, Chief United States Magistrate Judge  
